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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 PRS-01 PA-02 DHA-02 VOE-00 CU-04
/042 W
----------291905Z 055793 /47
R 291415Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1306
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 HELSINKI 0885

LONDON FOR RRU

USIA FOR: ICS/D, IEU

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FI
SUBJECT: AFL-CIO VICE-PRESIDENT ALBERT SHANKER VISITS FINLAND

1. AS PART OF POST'S CONTINUING EFFORT TO DEVELOP TIES AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN U.S. AND FINNISH LABOR MOVEMENTS, AFL-CIO VICE-PRESIDENT ALBERT SHANKER MADE A VERY EFFECTIVE FOUR DAY VISIT TO FINLAND (APRIL 17-21) WHICH INCLUDED EXTENSIVE MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH TOP GOVERNMENTAL, POLITICAL PARTY, TRADE UNION, AND MEDIA LEADERS. VISIT SERVED TO EXPLAIN AFL-CIO POSITIONS ON MANY FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY ISSUES AND ENABLED EMBASSY TO DEVELOP MANY NEW CONTACTS WITH FINNISH TRADE UNION LEADERS PARTICULARLY IN THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE'S SECTOR. WE EXPECT VISIT TO RESULT IN NEW EXCHANGES BETWEEN SHANKER'S AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND FINNISH TEACHER'S UNION AND TO LEAD TO INCREASED CONTACTS BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND FINNISH LABOR CONFEDERATIONS. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
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PARTY SECRETARY ULF SUNDQVIST, A FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND LEADING MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, COMMENTED: "WE WELCOME THIS CHANCE TO MEET WITH A TOP AMERICAN LABOR LEADER AND WE FEEL IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE MORE FREQUENT CONTACTS WITH U.S. LABOR LEADERS IN THE FUTURE."

2. SHANKER SPENT ALMOST AN ENTIRE DAY WITH OFFICIALS OF

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AKAVA, (FINNISH PROFESSIONAL WORKERS UNION) AND ITS MEMBER TEACHER'S UNION. ACTIVITIES INCLUDED LUNCH WITH SAMULI APAJALAHTI, AKAVA CHAIRMAN, PLUS LECTURE OF OFFICIALS OF AKAVA MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS ON "GENERAL LABOR MARKET ISSUES IN THE U.S.A." LECTURE WAS FOLLOWED BY SEMINAR WITH TEACHERS' UNION GOVERNING BOARD ON "THE ROLE OF AMERICAN TEACHERS' UNIONS. BOARD MEMBERS HAD SO MANY QUESTIONS SESSION WENT ON FOR OVER TWO HOURS. FOLLOWING WORKING DINNER, SHANKER WAS GUEST OF TEACHERS' UNION CHAIRMAN VOITTO RANNE FOR A SAUNA, AT WHICH DISCUSSIONS CONTINUED. BESIDES DAY AT AKAVA, SHANKER WAS GUEST OF HONOR AT LUNCH CO-HOSTED BY SULO PENTTILA, CHAIRMAN OF METAL WORKERS UNION, AND PERTTI VIINANEN, CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF FINNISH TRADE UNIONS (SAK) VICE-CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. HE WAS ALSO GUEST OF HONOR AT DINNER OFFERED BY CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SERVANTS, AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES UNION, ITS LARGEST COMPONENT.

3. MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INCLUDED DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION, MARJATTA VAANANEN, BRIEFING BY TEUVO VARJAS, DIRECTOR OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES NEGOTIATING DELEGATION IN MINISTRY OF FINANCE (OFFICE WHICH NEGOTIATES WITH PUBLIC IMPLOYEE UNIONS), AND RECEPTION OFFERED BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION WHERE SHANKER SPOKE TO 20 MINISTRY AND NATIONAL BOARD OF SCHOOLS OFFICIALS, PLUS PRESS, ON THE "ROLE OF AMERICAN TEACHERS' UNION."

4. SHANKER HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS INCLUDING MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT KAARINA SUONIA, ULF
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SUNDQVIST, PETER MUURMAN, WHO ATTENDED LUNCHEON HOSTED BY PAO AND EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELLOR. IN ADDITION, SHANKER GAVE A TALK ON "THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN AMERICAN POLITICS" TO TWELVE PARTY EXPERTS ON EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL POLITICS AT SDP HEADQUARTERS.
SHANKER ALSO MET FINNISH ILO DELEGATES, KARI VIRTANEN, AARNE VALIKANGAS AND ILKAA ERICH, AND THIS MAY RESULT IN CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN FINNS AND AMERICANS IN THE ILO.

5. SHANKER VISIT RECEIVED GOOD PRESS COVERAGE. HELSINGIN SANOMAT (CIR. 323,000) REPORTED MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LECTURE IN 3 COLUMN STORY WITH PHOTO. RADIO BROADCAST SHORT INTERVIEW RECORDED AFTER SAME LECTURE. SHANKER PRESS CONFERENCE APR. 20 RESULTED IN NEWS STORIES IN UUSI SUOMI (CIRM 84,000), AAMULEHTI (CIR. 125,000), AND A
FRONT PAGE 2 COLUMN PIECE IN SWEDISH LANGUAGE DAILY HUFVUDSTADSBLADET (CIR. 67,000), FULL-PAGE FEATURE ARTICLE IN APR. 23 EDITION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC DEMARI (CIR. 42,000). INTERVIEW WITH SHANKER WAS PROMINENTLY FEATURED

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IN FIVE-MINUTE TV REPORT ON AMERICAN
LABOR SHOWN, PRIME TIME, ON APR. 26. SHANKER GAVE LABOR'S
VIEW OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION IN U.S. IN ADDITION HE
EXPLAINED AFL-CIO'S ATTITUDE TO LABOR UNIONS IN COMMUNIST
BLOC BY STATING THAT "DRINKING CHAMPAGNE" WITH LABOR UNION
OFFICIALS IN EASTERN EUROPE IS NOT GOING TO HELP THE
OPPRESSED WORKERS IN THE SOVIET UNION, CZECHOSLOVAKIA OR
POLAND - RATHER, JOINING A PROTEST WILL BE A MORE EFFECTIVE
MEANS OF HELPING THOSE WORKERS.

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LONDON FOR RRU

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6. MOST IMPORTANT POINTS BROUGHT OUT IN MEETINGS
AND PRESS COVERAGE, WERE
A) SHANKER EXPLAINED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF AFL-CIO POSITION
ON VISAS FOR COMMUNIST TRADE UNION LEADERS. THERE IS A CLEAR
"NO" ON EAST EUROPEANS AND SOVIETS. HE REMARKED IN NEWS
CONFERENCE THAT"SOVIET TRADE UNION LEADERS ARE NOT FREELY
ELECTED. SHELEPIN (EX-KGB HEAD) AS SOVIET TRADE UNION BOSS,
LIKE HAVING J. EDGAR HOOVER AS HEAD OF AFL-CIO." IN AFL-CIO
OPINION LEADERS OF SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS ARE
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND SHOULD NOT BE DEALT WITH AS
TRADE UNION LEADERS. SHANKER STRESSED HIS UNDERSTANDING
THAT THERE IS NO FIXED AFL-CIO POLICY ON U.S. VISITS BY
FREELY ELECTED COMMUNIST OFFICIALS OF GENUINE

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TRADE UNIONS. HE SAID THAT JAPANESE TEACHERS' UNION GROUPS,
UNCLUDING COMMUNIST OFFICIALS, HAD VISITED U.S.
B) U.S. LABOR ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ANTI-FACIST SINCE THEY
ARE BOTH DICTATORIAL. SHANKER OPPOSED ACTION OF GOVTS.
OF CHILE, ARGENTINA, SOVIET UNION.
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C) AMERICAN UNIONS ARE DYNAMIC AND WORKING FOR BETTER LIFE
FOR ALL AMERICANS
$) SHANKER EXPLAINED ROLE OF SOCIALISTS IN THE U.S. HE
DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A SOCIALIST WHO WAS A MEMBER OF SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS U.S.A. WHEN ASKED HOW THIS SQUARED WITH HIS
ANTI-COMMUNISM, HE ANSWERED "I DON'T KNOW OF ANY DEMOCRATIC
SOCIALIST ALIVE IN THE SOVIET UNION."
E) N.Y.C. FINANCIAL PLIGHT DUE TO HUGE INFLUX OF POOR
SEEKING BETTER LIFE ON HIGH WELFARE PAYMENTS PAID THERE, AND
FLIGHT FROM CITY OF MIDDLE CLASS AND INDUSTRY TO ESCAPE
HIGH TAXES. POINTED OUT THAT 100,000 JOBS A YEAR ARE LOST
PERMANENTLY BY CITY.
H) ONLY 25 PERCENT OF U.S. WORKERS ORGANIZED. EMPLOYER OPPOSITION,
PLUS EMPLOYERS WHO PAY BETTER THAN AVERAGE WAGES HAVE DISSUADED
MANY WORKERS FROM JOINING UNIONS.

7. EMBASSY LABOR OFFICER WORKED VERY CLOSELY WITH USIS
TO ORGANIZE SHANKER VISIT, AND HELPED SET UP MANY KEY
MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS. HE HOSTED DINNER FOR AND ACCOMPANIED
SHANKER DURING MOST OF VISIT, THEREBY BROADENING HIS OWN
CONTACTS AMONG FINNISH LABOR LEADERS.

8. SHANKER HIGHLY ARTICULATE, DYNAMIC LABOR LEADER. ALSO,
HE WAS VERY EASY TO DEAL WITH, AND WAS ABLE TO HANDLE AN
EXTENSIVE AND INTENSIVE PROGRAM THAT KEPT HIM GOING FROM
MORNING LATE INTO EVENING EACH DAY. USING ICS RATING
SYSTEM SHANKER RATES: QP-E, ED-E, AR-E, RO-E.

9. SHANKER MENTIONED THAT HE MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR
PROGRAMMING AFTER ATTENDING ILO MEETING IN SUMMER. ICS/D
SHOULD CONTACT HIM ASAP SO THAT HE CAN BE OFFERED TO
OTHER POSTS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Concepts: LABOR UNION OFFICIALS, VISITS, MEETING REPORTS
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
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To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
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Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009